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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/J and INC
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SUBJECT: JAPAN, U.S. SIGN CARGO SECURITY ARRANGEMENT

¶1. Japan and the United States have signed a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) aligning security standards in both countries' trade partnership programs. Under this arrangement, signed on June 26 in Brussels, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Japan Customs and Tariff Bureau (CTB) recognize the compatibility of supply chain security measures covered by their respective trade partnership initiatives, i.e., the U.S. Customs-Trade Partnership against Terrorism (C-TPAT) and Japan's Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program. The MRA is expected to facilitate secure trade between the U.S. and Japan and to achieve cost savings by eliminating certain redundancies and, in all likelihood, reducing the number of supply chain security validations.

¶2. In October 2001, the legacy U.S. Customs Service (CBP) announced development of C-TPAT, a voluntary supply chain security partnership program, to promote supply chain security practices for cargo imported in to the U.S. In 2005, the World Customs Organization developed the SAFE framework of standards to promote the mutual recognition of international supply chain security standards. The MRA aims to encourage Customs administrations to secure and facilitate trade for members of their trade partnership programs by aligning security standards. The CBP website (www.cbp.gov) contains additional background information.

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